
1949

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

Medical Officer of Health

for the

URBAN DISTRICT

(Municipal Borough)

OF ROMSEY

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To the Mayor and Corporation of the Borough of Romsey.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit the Annual Report for 1949.

SECTION A. Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

Area (in acres) ...	...	...	...	...	1212
Population (as estimated by the Registrar General)...	...	...	...	...	6250
Rateable Value ...	...	...	...	...	£35,710
Sum represented by a 1d. rate	...	...	...	...	£156

A Brewery, a Horticultural Nursery, Paper Mills, Timber and Lumber Mills and a Jam Factory, give employment to a proportion of the population. The rest of the inhabitants are mostly engaged in retail trade or other occupations common to a Market Town.

VITAL STATISTICS.

		<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>			
Live Births—							
Legitimate	...	49	55	104	Birth rate per 1,000 estimated population 17.3.		
Illegitimate	...	2	2	4			
Still Births—							
Legal	...	1	1	2	Rate (per 1,000 live and still births)—19.		
Illegal	...	0	0	0			
Deaths	...	33	39	72	Death rate per 1,000 estimated population 11.5.		
Number of women dying in consequence of child birth.					From Sepsis	...	0
					From other causes	...	1

INFANTILE MORTALITY. Death rate of Infants under 1 year of age.

All infants per 1,000 live births	...	...	...	55.6
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate births	...	...	...	48.1
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate births	...	...	...	0
Deaths from Cancer all ages	...	...	...	11
Deaths from Measles all ages	...	...	...	0
Deaths from Whooping Cough all ages	...	...	...	0
Deaths from Diarrhoea under 2	...	...	...	1

Of all causes of death, Heart Disease accounted for 19, Cerebral Hæmorrhage 7, Cancer 11, Bronchitis 4, Pneumonia 2. The birth rate is above average in England and Wales and the death rate below the average. There were no deaths from Tuberculosis.

There has been very little change in the general nutrition. The improved housing conditions and school meals have benefited the children. Although environment makes a difference one cannot help feeling that food should be priority No. 1. Suitable food would make a difference to them physically and psychologically.

SECTION B. General Provision of Health Services.

1. *Public Health Officers of the Authority,*
 - (a) The Medical Officer of Health is also Assistant Medical Officer County Council and Medical Officer of Health for the adjoining Rural District of Romsey and Stockbridge.
 - (b) The Chief Sanitary Inspector is also Borough Engineer and Surveyor.
 - (c) Assistant Sanitary Inspector.
 - (d) A Veterinary Surgeon for the inspection of Dairies, Meat and other foods.
2. *Nursing in the Home.*
 - (a) General and Midwifery by District Nurses.
 - (b) In cases of ophthalmia not requiring hospital treatment, nursing is provided where necessary by the County Council.
3. *Laboratory Facilities.*
 - (a) County Laboratory, The Castle, Winchester.
 - (b) Emergency Public Health Laboratory, Royal Hampshire County Hospital, Winchester.
4. *Hospitals.*

General—The Romsey and District Hospital, The Southampton Hospital, and Broadlands Annexe are those principally used.

Infections—Where cases cannot be satisfactorily nursed at home, they are admitted by arrangement to the Salisbury and District Isolation Hospital.
5. *Welfare*

There is a Welfare Clinic and Centre at Romsey.

6. *Orthopaedic*

The County Council have arranged for children in this Area to attend the Clinics at Eastleigh and Totton. There is a Remedical Exercises Clinics in Romsey.

SECTION C. Sanitary Circumstances in the Area.

Report of the Borough Engineer, Surveyor, and Chief Sanitary Inspector.

1. **Water.**

The area is supplied with a piped supply by the Southampton Corporation from their Waterworks Pumping Station at Timsbury. The quality of the water is good and the supply "constant." A few houses in isolated areas still obtain their supply from shallow wells which are liable to contamination, and inadequate. The numbers of these houses have been reduced as opportunity offers.

2. **Drainage and Sewerage.**

During the year under review 75,558,220 gallons of sewage were pumped to the Sewage Works at Greenhill to receive treatment. The increase despite the reduced rainfall and dry summer with its consequent saving on infiltration is attributed to the completion and occupancy of the new post-war houses within the year, in the Town, the provision of baths and sanitary accommodation being contributory

The quantity dealt with its equivalent to an average twenty-four hour flow of 207,000 gallons which is the discharge expected from a population of 10,350 persons at an allowance of 20 gallons per head per day. During the six winter months 46,330,825 gallons were pumped, equal to an average 24 hour flow of 253,172 gallons—a discharge expected from a population of 12,658 persons during the six summer months 29,227,395 gallons were pumped equal to an average 24 hour flow of 159,712 gallons—the discharge expected from a population of 7,986 persons, allowing in both instances 20 gallons per head per day.

The amount of rainfall during the year registered at the Disposal Works was 29.48, 20.66 of which fell in the winter months and 8.82 in the summer months.

The need for the complete overhaul and extension of the Sewage Works is still very much in evidence. Considerable improvements have been effected as far as possible by cleanliness and minor improvements. The scheme and plans now in the course of preparation for this improvement is eagerly awaited, and will be a considerable relief to the resources and the minds of the officials when the work is put in hand. Breakdowns still occur at the time of a drought, but it is hoped that this problem will be solved with the improved scheme now under consideration.

A considerable amount of field work has been completed and it is anticipated that the proposal to sewer the Whitenap area of the Town will be available during the course of the year, with plans and specifications.

River and Streams.

There has been little pollution of the streams passing through the area apart from an occasional unauthorised disposal of garden refuse and waste vegetable matter. This has been properly dealt with by letters to persons who may most likely have been the cause. In general the circumstances have been satisfactory.

3. Closet Accommodation.

The District except in a few isolated cases is on water carriage system.

4. Public Cleansing.

The service is covered by District Labour over the whole of the district and mechanical transport is used. All premises are visited once per week, and in certain cases where the waste is heavy and highly putrescent, collections are made more frequently during the week. The arrangements are satisfactory and the work well organised. All the highways receive weekly cleansing, the main roads being cleansed by arrangements with the County Council, who contribute towards the cost, 101 loads of street sweepings with an estimated weight of 202 tons were collected during the year. The refuse collected is taken to the Controlled Tip at Timsbury, and after sorting is tipped into excavated disused gravel pits. Constant precautions are taken against vermin and rat infestation.

Sanitary Inspection in the Area.

Inspection of the District has been carried out as often as possible. General sanitary circumstances of the shops and compliance with the Shop Act, 1934 are complied with, and no action has been necessary with any shop during the course of the year. The total number of Sanitary Inspections amounted to 362 and 180 nuisances were discovered and subsequently abated.

During the year 7 fumigations were carried out after cases of infectious disease.

7. Camping Sites.

1. No sites were used for camping purposes during the year.
2. No licences under Section 269, of the Public Health Act 1936, were issued by the Local Authority during the year.
3. Estimated number of campers resident in the area at any one time—
None.

8. Smoke Abatement.

No complaints were received during the year. The Borough has few factories.

9 **Swimming Baths and Pools.**

Bathing for members of the male sex has for a great number of years by use and custom taken place in a portion of the Fishlake Stream towards the upper reaches of the Town. The river is continually flowing—the source of supply being the River Test.

The Corporation possess a modern open-air Swimming Pool, equipped with modern purification plant. This plant has been brought up to a state of perfection after the War years. The Pool is well managed and patronised. Samples of Pool water are taken at frequent intervals for bacteriological and other examinations. Records are kept and no adverse reports have been received.

During the year the number of persons using the Pool were as follows :—

Bathers—

Schoolchildren	..	3,033
Season Ticket Holders		4,884
Others	... ..	10,430
		<hr/>
		18,347

Spectators—

Schoolchildren	...	521
Others	... ..	1,042
		<hr/>
		19,910
		<hr/>

10. **Eradication of Bed Bugs.**

Number of Council Houses found to be infested	...	...	1
Other Houses do.	...	...	3
Number of fumigations carried out during the year	...	..	11

11. **Schools.**

Inspection was made from time to time on the sanitary circumstances and conditions in the Schools within the Borough. The Buildings for the most part are old, out-dated and overcrowded. The Sanitary Accommodation and drainage is connected with the Council Sewers and is on the water carriage system.

SECTION D. Housing.

1. **New Buildings and Housing.**

55 building plans were submitted for approval during the year, 6 of which were for the erection of a total of 6 houses, one for adaption into flats and 3 for improvements, by additions of bathrooms to houses.

The Corporation Housing Schemes at Botley Road and Mountbatten Avenue were completed and occupied, and whilst proposals were put forward for alternative sites, together with proposed housing types, no progress has been made on any housing construction, and nothing can be done until a proper site has been made available.

The standard of fitness for more than 50% of the property suitable for housing in the Borough, is well below the standard recommended by the Ministry of Health, and more than 20% are in such a state of dilapidation as to be incapable of repair at reasonable expense. In addition more than 300 applications for Council Houses have been received from families living in overcrowded conditions and a continuous new housing programme is therefore justified.

Administration.

For the amount of work dealt with and in hand, and the considerable volume of technical tasks and outside work to be supervised, together with the steady increase of delegated duties under planning, civil defence and the like, that have been imposed by Central Government Departments and others, this Department is by no means adequately staffed. The technical work of the Department involves a considerable amount of overtime, outside office hours, in addition to the many hours spent at evening Committee Meetings. A great effort has to be made to keep up to date.

The office facilities generally are poor. The quarters are cramped, badly lit and is the cause of much concern in this and other departments, within the building.

With regard to the outside staff, we are in many respects more fortunate, and have built up a competent force able to carry out many works that normally require the services of specialist contractors.

The maintenance of dwelling houses, Council's properties, Public Buildings and Parks are of a high standard for the labour force employed and the monies expended.

SECTION E. Inspection of Foods and Production.

The Veterinary Surgeon's Report, 1949.

1. Milk Supply.

Cowkeepers premises in the Borough were inspected during the year and improvements had been commenced in those cases in which deficiencies had been noted in the previous year's Report.

2. Meat and other Food Stuffs.

Pigs slaughtered in the Borough during the year numbered 15, and all were passed fit for human consumption.

The Slaughter Licence for one butcher was renewed.

All meat and offal found to be unfit for human consumption in the shops was condemned and destroyed.

Certain tinned meats and other foodstuffs were condemned, including four consignments of fish

Two consignments of sausages were delivered by rail in an unfit state and were destroyed.

Refrigerators and containers in the shops were examined and certain improvements and cleaning ordered and carried out.

SECTION F. Prevalence of, and control over Infectious and other Diseases.

Where cases cannot be satisfactorily nursed at home, they are admitted to the Isolation Hospital.

The incidence of infectious disease was very low. There were no cases of Diphtheria and 1 case of Scarlet Fever. There were 4 cases of Infantile Paralysis of which one was severe and two moderate and one mild.

Diphtheria Immunisation.

Children of school age are immunised at school. The under school age are partly done by local practitioners, at their surgeries and at the Welfare Centre. Diphtheria Immunisation has been carried out since 1935, and a large proportion of the young population have been immunised.

At the end of 1949, the number of children between 1 and 15 who have been immunised at any time is as follows:—

<i>Born—</i>	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945	1940-1944	1935-1939
	18	112	93	72	73	294	464

TOTAL 1126

Estimated population under 15—1506.

Notifiable Diseases (other than Tuberculosis) during the year 1949.

<i>Disease</i>	<i>Total Number Notified</i>	<i>Adults Admitted to Hospital</i>	<i>Total Deaths</i>
Measles ...	5	0	0
Scarlet Fever ...	1	1	0
Whooping Cough ...	1	0	0
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	1	1	0
Anterior Polio Myelitis ...	4	4	0
Erysipelas ...	1	0	0

CANCER.

Deaths—Males 4, Females .

TUBERCULOSIS.

New cases notified :—

Pulmonary—Males 4, Females 1. Non-Pulmonary—Males 0, Females 0.

Deaths—None,

Causes of Death in Romsey Urban District, 1949

<i>Causes of Death</i>				<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
ALL CAUSES	...	...	...	33	39
Tuberculosis	...	...	...	0	0
Cancer ...	...	...	...	4	7
Intra Cranial Vascular lesions	...	...	...	0	7
Heart ..	...	...	...	8	11
Other Circulatory	...	...	...	2	4
Bronchitis ...	...	...	...	2	2
Pneumonia	...	...	...	1	1
Other Respiratory	...	...	...	3	0
Ulcers Stomach	...	...	...	1	0
Diarrhoea, under 2	...	...	...	1	0
Apendicitis	...	...	...	0	0
Other Digestive disturbances	...	...	...	2	0
Nephritis ...	...	...	...	2	1
Premature Birth	...	...	...	0	0
Congenital injuries, etc.	...	...	...	1	1
Suicide ...	...	...	...	0	0
Road Traffic	...	...	...	0	0
Other Violent	...	...	...	0	1
All Others...	...	...	...	6	4

Yours faithfully,

G. TATE.

Medical Officer of Health.

